

Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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EO 11652 NA

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SUBJECT: LOCAL PRESS COMMENTARY ON ROC NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: THE AUGUST 29 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE AND FOLLOW-UP ITEMS ON ROC NUCLEAR REPROCESSING SPARKED A TWO-DAY FLURRY OF LOCAL PRESS COMMENTARY. MOST OF THE COMMENTARY FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE OFFICIAL ROC POSITION CONTAINED IN AN AUGUST 31 GOVERNMENT INFORMATION OFFICE (GIO) RELEASE WHICH DENIED THE ALLEGATIONS, AFFIRMED ROC ADHERENCE TO THE NPT AND IAEA SAFEGUARDS, AND CONCLUDED THAT THE ALLEGATIONS ARE THE PRODUCT OF "MALICIOUS FABRICATION."
END SUMMARY.

2. THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CHINA POST CARRIED AN AP DISPATCH ON THE WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON AUGUST 30. HOWEVER, THE CHINESE-LANGUAGE PRESS APPEARS TO HAVE AWAITED GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES AND DID NOT PUBLISH NEWS REPORTS OR COMMENTARY ON THE ALLEGATIONS UNTIL AFTER THE GIO RELEASE WAS ISSUED. FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE GIO RELEASE:

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3. A. "RECENT PRESS ALLEGATIONS THAT THE ROC HAS BEEN SECRETLY REPROCESSING SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FOR WEAPONRY ARE TOTALLY GROUNDLESS.

B. "1. THE ROC IS A FAITHFUL PARTY TO THE NPT GUARDING AGAINST THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. BESIDES, PREMIER CHIANG CHING-KUO HAS REPEATEDLY MADE IT KNOWN THAT THE ROC DEVELOPS NUCLEAR ENERGY AND CONDUCTS NUCLEAR RESEARCH SOLELY FOR PEACEFUL USES.

C. "2. THE ROC'S NUCLEAR REACTORS AND ALL RELATED FACILITIES AND MATERIALS ARE SUBJECT TO REGULAR INSPECTION AND SURVEILLANCE OF THE IAEA FOR SAFEGUARD. IN ADDITION TO THE SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTS SUBMITTED TO THE IAEA IN WHICH EVERY BIT OF IMPORTED URANIUM, INCLUDING TINY SCRAPS, IS ACCOUNTED FOR, ON-THE-SPOT INSPECTIONS ARE FREQUENTLY MADE BY IAEA EXPERTS. AS LATELY AS MID-JULY THIS YEAR, AN INSPECTION TEAM CONSISTING OF IAEA EXPERTS FROM THE (SIC) GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, PORTUGAL, ITALY AND NORWAY CAME TO THE COUNTRY TO TAKE A THOROUGH INVENTORY AND FOUND EVERYTHING IN GOOD ORDER. THEY EVEN BROUGHT ALONG A GAMMA-SPECTROSCOPE TO MEASURE THE RADIATION OF SPENT FUEL.

D. "3. THERE ARE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS TAKING PICTURES OF THE REACTOR TOP AND THE SURFACE OF THE STORAGE POOL WHICH REVEAL ALL OPERATIONS TAKING PLACE AND MAKE RECORDS ON A LOG BOOK.

E. "4. ALL OPERATIONS OF THE REACTORS ARE COMPUTERIZED.

F. "IN VIEW OF THE AFORE-MENTIONED HARD FACTS, WE CANNOT BUT CONCLUDE THAT SUCH ALLEGATIONS ARE THE PRODUCTS OF MALICIOUS FABRICATION DESIGNED TO HURT THE GOOD REPUTATION THE ROC ENJOYS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY."

4. THE SEPTEMBER 1 SEMI-OFFICIAL CHUNG YANG JIH PAO COMMENTED THAT THE PRESS ALLEGATIONS HAVE GREATLY EMBARRASSED THE GROC AND ROC SCIENTISTS. IT QUOTED AN OFFICIAL OF TAIPOWER AS SAYING THAT THE TAIPOWER REACTOR WILL NOT BEGIN OPERATION FOR ANOTHER YEAR AND THAT THE URANIUM IMPORTED SO FAR BY TAIPOWER IS IN STORAGE UNDER IAEA INSPECTION. THE TAIPOWER OFFICIAL ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF THE NUCLEAR MATERIAL MENTIONED BY FOREIGN NEWS REPORTS REFERRED TO THE URANIUM IMPORTED BY TAIPOWER, THESE REPORTS WERE OBVIOUSLY IN ERROR. CHUNG YANG JIH PAO URGED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE GROC TO TAKE EFFECTIVE MEASURES TO PREVENT SUCH GROUNDLESS RUMORS WHICH WERE AIMED AT CAUSING THE ROC TO LOSE ITS SOURCES OF SUPPLY OF URANIUM.

5. THE AUGUST 31 TSU LI WAN PAO COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE ROC HAS THE TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW TO PRODUCE ATOMIC BOMBS, IT WILL NOT DO SO AND WILL EMPHASIZE THE PEACEFUL USE OF ATOMIC ENERGY. IT URGED THE GROC TO DECLARE TO THE WORLD ITS POSITION OF NOT

MANUFACTURING NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

6. THE SEPTEMBER 2 LIEN HO PAO QUOTED PREMIER CHIANG'S COMMENTS IN A SEPTEMBER 17 INTERVIEW WITH UPI, REFERRED TO IAEA INSPECTION AND ROC ADHERENCE TO THE NPT, CONCLUDING THAT THE ROC HAS NEVER VIOLATED AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT.

7. CHUNG KUO SHIH PAO LINKED SPECULATION ON ROC REPROCESSING TO SPECULATIONS OF ROC ATTEMPTS TO SEEK SOVIET FRIENDSHIP, SAYING THAT SUCH SPECULATION WAS NOTHING BUT VICIOUS SLANDER. IT URGED FOREIGN MEDIA TO AVOID EXPLOITATION BY THE PRC.

8. LOCAL PRESS COMMENTARY ABATED ON SEPTEMBER 3 AND IS UNLIKELY TO RESUME IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.
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